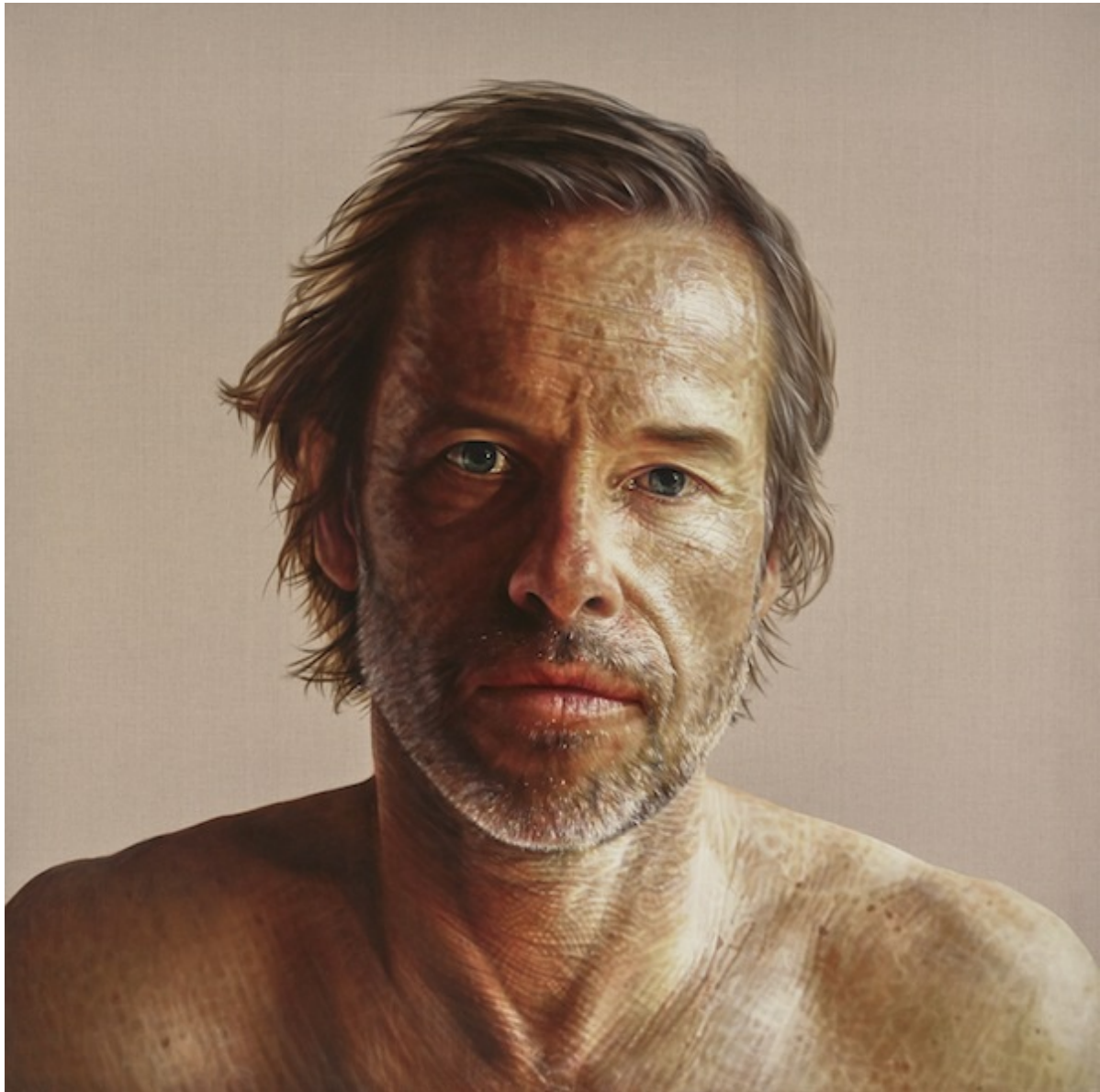


Portrait of Guy Pearce wins 2018 Archibald Prize ANZ People's Choice award

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The Art Gallery of New South Wales has announced the winner of the 2018 Archibald Prize ANZ People's Choice award as first time finalist Anne Middleton for her portrait of Australian actor, Guy Pearce.



Archibald Prize 2018 ANZ People's Choice award winner – Anne Middleton, *Guy*, oil on linen, 192 x 192cm © the artist.
Photograph: AGNSW, Jenni Carter

Middleton's work *Guy* is her first foray into large-scale portraiture. She cites an intrigue with the depth of emotion in Pearce's face as motivation for her choice of subject, taken as an invitation to challenge herself as a painter.

Pearce would visit the artist's studio in Melbourne in the gaps of his filming schedule. Middleton describes the location as directly informing the mood of the portrait:

'I painted Guy in the natural light of my studio. The light rakes across his face, casting one side of his face into deep shadow. [...] It is an uncompromising light, honest and unflinching'

It is this unbiased lighting that allows Pearce as the subject of the portrait to speak for himself, rather than be drowned by the default authority of the painter's interpretation. Middleton has displayed a mastery of skill in lightly restraining her voice as author, only exercising it to highlight or enhance what already exists within the actor. She recounts discussing with Pearce 'how we would capture a similar sensation of peering into his soul.'



Anne Middleton and Guy Pearce in the studio. Courtesy the artist

Achieving a delicate balance between subject and painter, the work extends this collaboration to the colliding fields of acting and painting. Middleton attributes the 'extreme tonality' gifted to her by the lighting in her studio as allowing her to 'explore the chameleon nature of Guy Pearce, a profound personal awareness of the light and dark that makes him both an extraordinary actor and a kind, funny and unassuming bloke.' He can be understood as a chameleon not only in his life as an actor, taking on various characters, but also simply as a man, between his professional and private life.

The ANZ People's Choice award carries a \$3,500 prize for the artist, and a \$2,000 cash prize for a randomly selected voter this year. *Guy* and the finalists' works for the 2018 Archibald, Wynne, and Sulman Prizes are on show at the Art Gallery of New South Wales until 9 September 2018.

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